

Laurel Hill Update

By the Laurel Hill Project Advisory Citizens Oversight Committee

July 2005

The Laurel Hill Project Advisory Citizens Oversight Committee was established by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in February 2005 to monitor the development of the Reformatory and Penitentiary area at Laurel Hill, adjacent to Silverbrook Road in Lorton, Virginia.



This committee-sponsored electronic newsletter is provided to keep citizens informed about adaptive reuse and other developments at Laurel Hill.

June 27 and July 6 Oversight Committee Meetings

June 27 Meeting

The Laurel Hill Project Advisory Citizens Oversight Committee met in the community meeting room of Supervisor Gerry Hyland's Mt. Vernon District office. Supervisor Hyland attended the meeting as did Chris Caperton, the county's project coordinator for the entire Laurel Hill site.

Historic Preservation

Supervisor Hyland announced that he is sponsoring a public meeting regarding the nomination of a 512-acre district at Laurel Hill to the National Register of Historic Places. The historic district would include the Reformatory and Penitentiary area adjacent to Silverbrook Road as well as the Occoquan facility adjacent to Ox Road (Route 123).

The meeting will take place at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, September 22, 2005. The location will be announced. It will provide an additional opportunity to convey information and receive public input about the National Register nomination.

The Fairfax County Architectural Review Board, the Fairfax County History Commission and the Lorton Heritage Society sponsored a meeting about the National Register nomination on May 14.

Please see "Other Laurel Hill News" for additional meeting dates regarding the National Register nomination.

Responses to Requests for Expression of Interest

As noted in the Oversight Committee's June newsletter, the County received 16 responses to the Request for Expression of Interest (ROI) by the June 3, 2005 deadline. The County is inviting respondents to provide additional information, which will help inform the Request for Proposal process. The information will be available in time for discussion during the Oversight Committee's meeting in August.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) process, which requires more detailed planning and financial information from potential candidates, is scheduled to begin this fall. There was discussion during the June 27 meeting about ensuring that the RFP is advertised to as broad an audience as possible.

Status of Asbestos Abatement and Stabilization at Laurel Hill

According to a status report provided by Mr. Caperton, the asbestos survey work of all Laurel Hill structures including the Reformatory, Penitentiary, Occoquan facility, Dairy Farm, and Youth and Youth Center facility is nearly complete. The final report is due in mid-August.

Stabilization activities at the Occoquan facility have been underway for several weeks, and include the removal of slate roofs, bad roof sheathing, soffits and fascia boards. No extensive stabilization efforts are taking place at the Reformatory and Penitentiary area. Some roof repair activities are taking place at the Laurel Hill house.

Chimney at Occoquan site

The County has decided to dismantle the top 53 feet of the 105-foot chimney located on the eastern site of the Laurel Hill Workhouse property because of extensive deterioration. The condition of the chimney poses an imminent hazard to workers in the vicinity as well as the general public.

There was discussion about the following options presented by County staff:

- 1) Rebuild the top 53 feet of the chimney
- 2) Restore and maintain the bottom 52 feet
- 3) Dismantle the bottom 52 feet

Further discussion was planned for the Oversight Committee's July 6 meeting.

July 6 Meeting

The meeting was held at the Fairfax County Government Center

Responses to Request for Expression of Interest

County staff has asked respondents to the Request for Expression of Interest (ROI) to provide additional information by July 21, 2005. The results will be presented at the Oversight Committee's August 3 meeting.

As a result, the Oversight Committee deferred action on a motion to move forward with the recommendations of the Laurel Hill Adaptive Reuse Citizens Task Force pending review of the additional information.

Out-Of-Turn Plan Amendment

During its February 7, 2005 meeting, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors authorized County staff to prepare an Out-Of-Turn Plan Amendment to consider revisions to the Comprehensive Plan for Laurel Hill. The amendment would support recommendations for the Reformatory and Penitentiary area developed by the Laurel Hill Adaptive Reuse Citizens Task Force.

During the July 6 meeting, the Oversight Committee voted to recommend that County staff implement the following schedule for drafting the Out-Of-Turn Plan Amendment:

- August 1 – 30: Translation of the Board of Supervisors' adopted report into plan language
- Early September: Review of draft amendment by the Oversight Committee
- October: Community meetings
- November: Revisions by the Oversight Committee based on community input
- January: Planning Commission public hearings
- February: Board of Supervisors public hearings

- To Be Determined: Specific timeframes for staff review and meetings and coordination with federal representatives and agencies to discuss plan amendments and the reuse plan

Laurel Hill Park Plan – Planning Commission Hearing

The Fairfax County Planning Commission postponed the July 14 public hearing to review the Fairfax County Park Authority's master plan for Laurel Hill Park. The postponement will allow additional time for public review and input.

The Oversight Committee will review the Laurel Hill Park plan and provide comment through direct testimony or a letter to the Planning Commission.

Chimney at Occoquan Site (Please refer to June 27 meeting summary)

According to information provided by County staff, the estimated cost to dismantle the top portion of the chimney and repair and stabilize the base is approximately \$300,000. The preliminary cost to restore the chimney to its original height is \$160,000.

The Oversight Committee voted to recommend dismantling the top 53 feet of the chimney, stabilizing the remainder of the chimney, and preserving of the original materials with the goal of restoring the chimney to its original height at some point in the future.

Next Oversight Committee Meeting – August 3

The next meeting of the Oversight Committee will be 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 3, at the Fairfax County Government Center.

Other Laurel Hill News

The Workhouse Arts Center

The Lorton Arts Foundation needs to raise \$27.5 million for the first phase of its construction plans. The non-profit organization is hoping to raise the money through privately financed bonds. L.A.F. is asking Fairfax County to back the bonds, as well as provide \$1 million per year for the first five years to cover maintenance costs.

During the July 11 Board of Supervisors meeting, Supervisor Hyland asked for consideration of these matters, and consideration of credit enhancement through the guaranteed lease back of a portion of rental space at the L.A.F.'s Occoquan site.

Specifically, Supervisor Hyland moved that the Board direct staff to:

- Prepare a consideration item for the Fiscal Year 2005 Carryover Review that will provide for payment of \$500,000 to the L.A.F. in Fiscal Year 2006 for site and building maintenance. In exchange, the L.A.F. will be asked to agree to raise a matching \$500,000 or greater in Fiscal Year 2006. Included in the consideration item, the County Executive will be directed to include a continuing annual maintenance contribution of \$1 million in the County Executive's Fiscal Year 2007 budget proposal for the Board's consideration. The Foundation will also be asked to raise at least another \$1 million by the end of FY 2007 to qualify for the FY 2008 contribution.
- To finish the negotiation of the proposed lease of the facility expeditiously for the Board's approval to include consideration of credit enhancement through the guaranteed lease back of a portion of the rental space. The lease should also include provision for continued review of

ongoing funding and credit support for an initial start-up period with the intent of reducing County support once the project becomes self-sustaining.

During the Board's discussion, an amendment was accepted, directing staff to provide detailed analysis and the financial viability of the proposal.

The motion as amended was carried by a vote of nine to one.

National Register of Historic Places Nomination at Laurel Hill – Public Meetings

The Fairfax County Architectural Review Board, in conjunction with the Fairfax County History Commission and the Lorton Heritage Society are moving forward with the nomination of a 512-acre district at Laurel Hill to the National Register of Historic Places. The historic district would include the Reformatory and Penitentiary area adjacent to Silverbrook Road as well as the Occoquan facility adjacent to Ox Road (Route 123).

The following public meetings have been scheduled regarding the National Register nomination:

- Mt. Vernon District Supervisor Gerry Hyland is sponsoring a community meeting to discuss the National Register nomination at 7:30 p.m., Thursday September 22, 2005. The location of the meeting will be announced.
- The Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing about the National Register nomination at 4:30 p.m., on Monday, October 17, at the Fairfax County Government Center, during the weekly board meeting.
- The Virginia Department of Public Resources has scheduled its required public meeting about the nomination at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 25, at the Fairfax County Government Center in Conference Rooms 4 and 5.

Laurel Hill Park Plan – Planning Commission Hearing

The Fairfax County Planning Commission postponed the July 14, public hearing to review the Fairfax County Park Authority's master plan for Laurel Hill Park. The meeting has been rescheduled for October 6, 2005.

Laurel Hill Transportation Analysis

The Fairfax County Department of Transportation is conducting a study of existing and future traffic, land use and environmental considerations, and alternative alignments for the arterial roadways in the Laurel Hill vicinity. The study schedule calls for the identification of proposed road alignments by the fall of 2005.

The Oversight Committee's next electronic newsletter will be published in August.

Additional information about the land use plans for Laurel Hill, including parkland and adaptive reuse areas are available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/laurelhill/